

Summary of QUALITY TEACHING Elements

Quality teaching in NSW public schools: a classroom practice guide. (2003). State of NSW, Department of Education and Training Professional Support and Curriculum Directorate: Ryde.

Dimension 1

INTELLECTUAL QUALITY	
1.1 Deep Knowledge	Knowledge is deep when it concerns the central ideas or concepts of a topic, subject or KLA and when the knowledge is judged to be crucial to the topic, subject or KLA. Deep knowledge is evident when either the teacher or the students provide information, reasoning or arguments that address the centrality or complexity of a key concept or idea, or when relatively complex relations are established to other central concepts. (p.12) ...Deep knowledge is about how content is presented in a lesson. (p.13)
1.2 Deep Understanding	Deep understanding is evident when students demonstrate their grasp of central ideas and concepts. Students demonstrate deep understanding when they explore relationships, solve problems, construct explanations and draw conclusions in relatively systematic, integrated or complex ways. (p.14) ...Deep understanding is about the learning the students demonstrate. (p.15)
1.3 Problematic Knowledge	Knowledge is treated as problematic when it involves an understanding of knowledge not as a fixed body of information, but rather as being socially constructed, and hence subject to political, social and cultural influences and implications. Multiple, contrasting and potentially conflicting forms of knowledge are presented and recognised as constructed and open to question. (p.16) For example, in talking about <i>my family</i> , they can see that families mean different things to different people (one, two or many parents; no siblings or many; extended family or nuclear) and that the notion of family depends on the circumstances. (p.17)
1.4 Higher-Order Thinking	Higher-order thinking requires students to manipulate information and ideas in ways that transform their meaning and implications. This transformation occurs when students combine facts and ideas in order to synthesise, generalise, explain, hypothesise or arrive at some conclusion or interpretation. Manipulating information and ideas through these processes allows students to solve problems and create new (for them) meanings and understandings. When students demonstrate higher-order thinking, they may also generate unexpected concepts, ideas and products which can take the learning in new directions. (p.18) ...unless there are opportunities to engage in higher-order thinking, it is unlikely that students will achieve deep understanding of a concept. (p.19)
1.5 Metalanguage	Lessons high in metalanguage have high levels of talk about language and about how texts work. Teachers or students frequently take the opportunity to draw attention to particular aspects of texts (e.g. words, images, symbols) either at a key point in the lesson or when students are obviously having difficulties in interpretation. Such discussion will often focus on pointing out how differing sentences, types of texts, discourses and other symbolic representations actually work; comparing and contrasting different texts; and showing how language and symbols can be used to construct texts, knowledge and power. (p.20) The specialist terminology of KLAs and subjects is not in itself metalanguage unless its use is explained in non-specialist terms. ...symbol systems (e.g...) operate as forms of language when they structure meaning. Language about, or commentary on, how these symbolic systems function can be considered metalanguage. (p.21)
1.6 Substantive Communication	In classes with high levels of substantive communication there is sustained interaction about the substance of the lesson. Classes high in substantive communication have three characteristics: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • there is sustained interaction • the communication is focused on the substance of the lesson • the interaction is reciprocal This element identifies the quality of communication (oral, written or symbolic) required to promote coherent shared understanding. (p.22) Encourage students to generate questions about the topic for research and discussion and use these as a basis for lesson development. (p.23)

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Dimension 2

QUALITY LEARNING ENVIRONMENT	
2.1 Explicit Quality Criteria	<p>High explicit quality criteria is identified by frequent, detailed and specific statements about the quality of work required by students. Explicit quality criteria become reference points when the teacher and / or students use the criteria to develop and check their own work or the work of others. (p.26)</p> <p>Provide annotated exemplars, work samples or models that illustrate high quality student performance based on the criteria. These exemplars could be work from past students and other sources. (p.27)</p>
2.2 Engagement	<p>High engagement is identified by on-task behaviours that signal a serious investment in class work. These behaviours include sustained interest and attentiveness, individual focus on work, showing enthusiasm for the work, and taking the work seriously. High engagement may also be evident when students take the initiative to raise questions, contribute to group tasks and help peers. (p.28)</p> <p>Serious engagement, however, often lacks demonstrable forms. (p.29)</p>
2.3 High Expectations	<p>Expectations are high when teachers (or students) communicate the expectation that all members of the class can learn important knowledge and skills that are challenging for them. Students are encouraged and recognised for taking conceptual or other risks in learning. Expectations are also high when students at all levels are expected, and try, to master challenging work whether the challenge is intellectual, physical or performance-based. (p.30)</p> <p>The coding scale for this element emphasises that the element of high expectations is not about how many students are participating in the lesson, but about how many students are participating in challenging work. (p.31)</p>
2.4 Social Support	<p>Classrooms high in social support for student learning encourage all students to try hard and risk initial failure in a climate of mutual respect. Classrooms high in social support are characterised by teacher and student behaviours, comments and actions that encourage and value effort, participation, and the expression of one's views in the pursuit of learning. If disagreement or conflict occurs in the classroom, it is resolved in a constructive way for all concerned. (p.32)</p> <p>The teacher has the responsibility for setting the tone in the classroom by creating and maintaining a mutually respectful environment. (p.33)</p>
2.5 Students' Self-Regulation	<p>High self-regulation is evident when the lesson proceeds without interruption and when students demonstrate autonomy and initiative in relation to their own behaviour in ways that allow the class to "get on" with learning. There is virtually no time spent, or need for time to be spent in the lesson, on disciplining students' behaviour or regulating student movements. (p.34)</p> <p>Ensure activities are purposeful and interesting with clear goals that students perceive to be worthwhile. (p.35)</p>
2.6 Student Direction	<p>Classrooms with high student direction see students exercising control over one or more of the following aspects of a lesson:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • choice of activities • time spent on activities • pace of the lesson • criteria by which they will be assessed. <p>When students assume responsibility for the activities in which they engage, and / or how they complete them, the activities are likely to be student-centred (e.g. group work, individual research and practical investigation projects.). (p.36)</p> <p>Teachers will have different scope to provide opportunities for students to exercise control over these four aspects depending on the subject they are teaching or the stage of their students. (p.37)</p>

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Dimension 3

SIGNIFICANCE

3.1 Background Knowledge

High background knowledge is evident when lessons provide students with opportunities (or they take opportunities) to make connections between their knowledge and experience and the substance of the lesson. Background knowledge may include prior school knowledge or it may include "out-of-school" knowledge, such as local knowledge, cultural knowledge, personal experience and knowledge of media and popular culture. (p.40)

The main focus of this element is whether or not the background knowledge of students in the class is valued and linked with the substance of the lesson. (p.41)

3.2 Cultural Knowledge

Cultural knowledge is high when there is an understanding, valuing and acceptance of the traditions, beliefs, skills, knowledge, languages, practices and protocols of diverse social groups. Cultural knowledge is high when the lesson recognises and values claims to knowledge from multiple social groups in an authentic, detailed and profound manner. Different social groupings are identified in relation to the dominant Australian culture and are distinguished by characteristics such as socioeconomic status, gender, ethnicity, race, age, sexuality, disability, language and religion. (p.42)

The element of cultural knowledge concerns the recognition and valuing of the **knowledge** of different social groups... (p.43)

3.3 Knowledge Integration

High knowledge integration is identifiable when meaningful connections are made between different topics and / or different subjects. For instance, when students address themes or problems which require knowledge from multiple topics or subject areas, knowledge integration will be high. (p.44)

Integration of knowledge, understandings and skills from other subject areas will enhance learning **only** if it contributes to the deep understanding of core concepts. (p.45)

3.4 Inclusivity

High Inclusivity is evident when all students in the classroom, from all cultural or social backgrounds, participate in the public work of the class and when their contributions are taken seriously and valued. High Inclusivity is evident when the classroom is free from negative forms of prejudice and discrimination, and thus all individuals, regardless of their social grouping, feel encouraged to participate fully in the lesson. (p.46)

The element of Inclusivity refers specifically to recognising and valuing **students** from diverse social groups who are actually in the class... (p.47)

3.5 Connectedness

High connectedness is evident when learning has value and meaning beyond the classroom and school. Lessons exhibit high connectedness through addressing either a public problem or actual experiences or situations that students will confront. High connectedness is also evident when there are attempts to interact with an audience beyond the classroom by communicating knowledge to others (including within the school), advocating solutions to social problems, providing assistance to people, or creating performances or products and exploring their utilitarian or aesthetic value. (p.48)

Make explicit and have students explore the link between their context and significant concepts being investigated. (p.49)

3.6 Narrative

Use of narrative is high when stories are written, told, read, viewed or listened to help illustrate or bring to life the knowledge that students are addressing in the classroom. Narratives may include personal stories, biographies, historical accounts, case studies, literary and cultural texts and performances. Narrative does not increase significance if the stories used are unconnected to the substance of the lesson or unproductive in terms of student learning. Narrative may be high if there is only one narrative present in the lesson as long as that narrative enhances the significance of the substance of the lesson. (p.50)

Lessons may employ narrative as **content** (e.g. when students are reading or listening to stories) or as **process** (e.g. when students are writing or telling stories). (p.51)